

Florence Township Council Regular Session 6/17/20

Florence, New Jersey
June 17, 2020

The Florence Township Council held a regular meeting via teleconference on the above date in the Municipal Complex, 711 Broad Street, Florence, New Jersey.

The meeting was called to order by Council President Sandusky at 7:00 PM. Council President Sandusky led the Salute to the Flag.

The Opening Statement was read by the Township Clerk: This meeting is being held in accordance with the provisions of the Open Public Meetings Act. Adequate notice was published in the Burlington County Times on April 3, 2020; placed on the Township website, and given to the Trenton Times for information.

ROLL CALL OF MEMBERS

Upon roll call the following were found to be present:

Present: Frank Baldorossi, Bruce Garganio, Paul Ostrander, Dave Woolston, Jerry Sandusky

Also Present: Mayor Craig H. Wilkie, Stephen Fazekas, Township Administrator, Thomas A. Sahol, Assistant Administrator, Kelly Grant, Township Solicitor; Nancy L. Erlston, Township Clerk

Absent: None

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

None at this time.

FINANCIAL CORRESPONDENCE

- Township Clerk's Monthly Report for May 2020
- Tax Collector's Monthly Water & Sewer Report for April 2020
- Tax Collector's Monthly Tax Report for May 2020
- CFO's Report of Sale of Tax Anticipation Notes
- CFO's Report of Sale of Bond Anticipation Notes
- CFO's Budget Reports for May 2020
- CFO's Cash Reports for May 2020
- Court Administrator's Monthly Report for May 2020
- Tax Collector's Monthly Water & Sewer Report for May 2020

Motion of Ostrander, seconded by Baldorossi to approve the reports to receive and file. Voice vote – all ayes.

Motion of Woolston, seconded by Ostrander, to approve the **Treasurer's Bill List**.

Upon roll call, Council voted as follows:

YEAS: Baldorossi, Garganio, Ostrander, Woolston, Sandusky

NOES: None

ABSENT: None

Unanimous vote – Motion carried.

Florence Township Council Regular Session 6/17/20

REGULAR CORRESPONDENCE

None at this time.

APPLICATIONS

A. Renewal Transient Merchant License, Patrick Bjornson dba Mister Softee.

Motion of Garganio, seconded by Baldorossi to approve the application.

Upon roll call, Council voted as follows:

YEAS: Baldorossi, Garganio, Ostrander, Woolston, Sandusky

NOES: None

ABSENT: None

Unanimous vote – Motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Council President Sandusky opened the meeting to the public at this time.

Don Kamienski, 10 McCay Drive, asked if the train tracks over Olive Street would be removed. Mayor Wilkie explained that area of the tracks are under the control of Conrail. It has been requested that Conrail remove those tracks but there has been no response from them yet. Assistant Administrator Tom Sahol said that he believes that they will look favorably upon the request, and it is just a matter of time that they put it into their work schedule.

Sophia Pastore, 1063 Hornberger Avenue, wanted to bring up the importance of our town taking a stand towards racial injustice by taking a look at our police department. She said she thinks it is a really important issue across the board. Defunding the police department would free up funds in the budget that could be reallocated to support social events, schooling, education, etc. Ms. Pastore asked that the governing body address ways to correct the inflated police department budget.

Mayor Wilkie explained that there is nothing that indicates that the police budget is inflated. He said that in the nine years that he has been handling the budgets there has never been an issue of inflation. He said that there are a number of alternatives that we offer to our community, specifically over the last few years. Right now, we are in a financial situation due to COVID-19. We have recreational programs, senior citizen programs, and last year we eliminated recreation fees. We have concerts in the parks and we are doing renovations in some neighborhoods. As mentioned earlier about the railroad tracks, we are in the middle of those improvements to make the community more accessible with walkways, playgrounds and safety surfaces throughout the playgrounds so they are safer for everyone. So, across the board we are doing many things in that capacity. We are not looking to defund our police department.

One of the things he said he was criticized for during the PILOT program, was people saying that the town kept all of the money and it wasn't given to the schools, fire department or the police departments. We have been maintaining our police force and providing them with the support they need to deal with the issues as needed. The military has been offering free equipment in transferring those types of items but we have never accepted that, we are not a militant type of police force. Over the last two years we have police officers working in the school system as Resource Officers and one of the main ideas is for children get to know the police in a less intensive, less confrontational atmosphere. It is actually one of the reasons why past Police Chief Scully started the DARE program over 30 years, to help children to get to know the officers on a regular basis.

Florence Township Council Regular Session 6/17/20

Ms. Pastore said that our country is going through a crisis and in her opinion, it was more important to focus on individuals who are trained to address mental health issues rather than just police officers who have not been trained.

Councilman Garganio mentioned that our officers are very well trained. They complete many training hours every year and throughout their career. He stated that ultimately, we can have better training and bring the resources to our officers and we can make them as good as they can be. He said that our police department does a very good job. We want a community where everyone is comfortable and has the ability to live and have the same rights and we are going to work for that. Defunding the police department is difficult.

Sophia Pastore thanked Council for their responses to her concerns.

Seeing no one else wishing to be heard, a motion was made by Ostrander, seconded by Garganio to close Public Comments. Voice vote – all ayes.

RESOLUTIONS

RESOLUTION NO. 2020-117 Authorizing Refunds of Certain Tax Overpayments

RESOLUTION NO. 2020-118 Authorize Twp. Eng. & Asst. Administrator to File Application for 2021 NJDOT Municipal Aid Program for Wilbur Henry Drive Reconstruction

RESOLUTION NO. 2020-119 Authorize Municipal Lien for Property Maintenance Violations

RESOLUTION NO. 2020-120 Authorize Mayor to Sign the TWA Application for Sewer Extension for 899 Oak Street

RESOLUTION NO. 2020-121 Burlington County Mutual Aid and Assistance Agreement Between Participating Units

RESOLUTION NO. 2020-122 Award Contract 2020 Road Program

Motion of Ostrander, seconded by Garganio to approve Resolution No. 2020-117 through 2020-119 and No. 2020-121 and 2020-122.

Upon roll call, Council voted as follows:

YEAS: Baldorossi, Garganio, Ostrander, Woolston, Sandusky

NOES: None

ABSENT: None Unanimous vote – Motion carried.

Motion of Garganio, seconded by Sandusky to approve Resolution No. 2020-120. Woolston recused.

Florence Township Council Regular Session 6/17/20

Upon roll call, Council voted as follows:

YEAS: Baldorossi, Garganio, Ostrander, Sandusky

NOES: None

ABSENT: None

Unanimous vote – Motion carried.

ORDINANCES

None at this time.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES, BOARDS AND OFFICERS

None at this time.

REPORTS: ADMINISTRATION

Mayor

Mayor Wilkie stated that on Thursday, June 18th Matthew Williams will be presented with a clock for his Eagle Scout at the Scout House at 6:00 p.m. He said that they are not going to have an Eagle Award of Honor, it will just be a gathering of his family and his leaders when presented with the clock.

He wished all of the fathers a Happy Father's Day, which is Sunday, June 21st. There will not be another Council meeting until July 8th so he wished everyone a Happy 4th of July as well.

He mentioned that we got great numbers on the road program and the decision is to move forward with Wilbur Henry Drive, trying to get grant money for next year and hopefully completing that project.

Administrator

Administrator Fazekas stated that five years ago Council passed a resolution accepting, effective June 17th, dedication of Richard's Run, Daniel's Way and John Galt Way to the township. He had met with Terrence Huettl of Whitesell and he has all of the documentation which has been passed along to our solicitor for review.

Effective July 6th, all employees will be returning to work on a full time basis but the building will remain closed to the public. July 8th is the next Council meeting and will again be a virtual meeting. The Governor is going to be relaxing some restrictions effective July 6th but he thought it best to keep that meeting virtual if Council approves. We will look toward our next meeting on August 5th and it will be decided if we come back in person then.

Administrator Fazekas thanked Township Engineer Jim Biegen and Assistant Administrator Sahol for the excellent work that they did in putting together the entire bid package for the Road Program. It had been discussed as putting it together as one bid package. We got excellent numbers on the road programs and we are able to accomplish the things that we wanted to.

Division of Engineering

Jim Biegen thanked Council for passing the resolution for the road program. He said that we will be getting a contract out and have pre con meeting in about a week and a half. He will keep everyone updated as to the progress.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None at this time.

Florence Township Council Regular Session 6/17/20

NEW BUSINESS

Councilman Woolston extended his thanks for the shrubs and flowers that were donated and also to thank everyone involved in organizing, distributing and helping to beautify the town.

BOARD OF HEALTH

None at this time.

MISCELLANEOUS

None at this time.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Council President Sandusky opened the meeting to the public at this time.

Seeing no one wishing to be heard, a motion was made by Ostrander, seconded by Woolston to close Public Comments. Voice vote – all ayes.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion of Garganio, seconded by Ostrander to adjourn. Voice vote – all ayes. Meeting adjourned at 7:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy L. Erlston, RMC
Township Clerk
/jns